

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete list of all claims pending.

1.-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) An image processing method in a image processing system ~~comprising a~~ that includes an image processing apparatus and ~~a~~ an image storage apparatus, said method comprising the steps of:

holding first information including a characteristic quantity of each of a plurality of material images by ~~said~~ the image processing apparatus, the first information corresponds to each of ~~said~~ the plurality of material images and has an amount of information less than that of each of ~~said~~ the plurality of material images;

determining a material image and its position according to an original image and ~~said~~ the first information by ~~said~~ the image processing apparatus;

storing ~~said~~ the plurality of material images ~~by~~ said in the image storage apparatus, and

outputting an material image out of ~~said~~ the plurality of material images stored in ~~said~~ the storage apparatus according to the position determined in said determining step.

12. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 11, wherein said determining step ~~determines~~ includes determining a material image corresponding to each block created by dividing the original image for positioning of the material image, and

said outputting step ~~forms~~ includes forming a mosaic image by combining material images corresponding to each block.

13. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 11, wherein ~~said the~~ the first information is a scale-down image of each of ~~said the~~ the plurality of material images.

14. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 11, wherein ~~said the~~ the first information is a characteristic quantity of each of ~~said the~~ the plurality of material images.

15. (Currently Amended) A image processing method for selecting a desired material image from a plurality of material images stored in a image storage apparatus according to a characteristic of an original image, said method comprising the steps of:

holding information including a characteristic of each of ~~said the~~ the plurality of material images;

determining a material image according to the original image and ~~said the~~ the information; and

outputting information indicating ~~said the~~ the determined material image to ~~said the~~ the image storage apparatus.

16. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 15, wherein said output step ~~combines~~ includes combining selected material images to form a mosaic image.

17. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 15, further comprising a step of receiving information including a characteristic of each of ~~said the~~ the plurality of material images from ~~said the~~ the image storage-apparatus.

18. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 15, wherein ~~said the~~ the plurality of material images are divided into a plurality of groups and held, and said method further ~~comprising~~ comprises a step of specifying any of ~~said the~~ the plurality of groups.

19. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 15, further comprising a step of receiving the mosaic image formed in ~~said the~~ the image storage apparatus.

20.-40. (Cancelled)

41. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus for selecting a desired material image from a plurality of material images stored in an image storage apparatus according to a characteristic of an original image, said apparatus comprising:

holding means for holding information including a characteristic of each of ~~said~~ the plurality of material images;;

determination means for determining a material image according to the original image and ~~said~~ the information;; and

output means for outputting information indicating ~~said~~ the determined material image to ~~said~~ the image storage apparatus.

42. (Currently Amended) The apparatus ~~of~~ according to claim 41, wherein said output means combines selected material images to form a mosaic image.

43. (Currently Amended) The apparatus ~~of~~ according to claim 41, further comprising a means for receiving information including a characteristic of each of ~~said~~ the plurality of material images from ~~said~~ the image storage apparatus.

44. (Currently Amended) The apparatus ~~of~~ according to claim 41, wherein ~~said~~ the plurality of material images are divided into a plurality of groups and held and said apparatus further comprising a means for specifying any of ~~said~~ the plurality of groups.

45. (Currently Amended) The apparatus ~~of~~ according to claim 41, further comprising a means for receiving the mosaic image formed in ~~said~~ the storage apparatus.

46.-56. (Cancelled)

57. (Currently Amended) An image processing system comprising an image processing apparatus and an image storage apparatus, said image processing apparatus comprising:

means for holding first information including a characteristic quantity of each of a plurality of material images, wherein the first information corresponds to each of ~~said~~ the plurality of material images and has an amount of information less than that of each of ~~said~~ the plurality of material images; and

determination means for determining a material image and its position according to an original image and ~~said~~ the first information;

said image storage apparatus comprising:

means for storing ~~said~~ the plurality of material images; and

means for outputting a material image out of ~~said~~ the plurality of material images stored in said image storage apparatus according to the position determined by said determination means.

58. (Currently Amended) The system ~~of~~ according to claim 57, wherein said determination means determines a material image corresponding to each block created by dividing the original image for positioning of the material image, and said output means forms a mosaic image by combining material images corresponding to each block.

59. (Currently Amended) The system of according to claim 57, wherein ~~said the~~ first information corresponding to ~~said the~~ material images is a plurality of scale-down image or a plurality of image characteristic parameters corresponding to ~~said the~~ plurality of material image.

60. (Currently Amended) The system of according to claim 57, wherein said image processing apparatus further ~~comprising~~ comprises receiving means for receiving the first information corresponding to ~~said the~~ plurality of material images from said image storage apparatus.

61. (Currently Amended) The system of according to claim 57, wherein said receiving means receives the first information corresponding to ~~said the~~ material images during activation of said image processing system.

62. (Currently Amended) The system of according to claim 58, wherein said storage means stores ~~said the~~ plurality of material images by dividing ~~said the~~ plurality of material images into a plurality of groups, and said determination means determines a material image and its position according to the first information corresponding to a plurality of material images contained in a selected group.

63. (Currently Amended) The system of according to claim 58, wherein said receiving means further receives a mosaic image generated by said output means.

64. (Currently Amended) The system ~~of~~ according to claim 58, wherein said image processing apparatus receives the material image determined by said determination means from said image storage means by said receiving means and positions the material image received by said receiving means according to the position determined by said determination means to form a mosaic image.

65. (Currently Amended) The system ~~of~~ according to claim 57, wherein a plurality of said image processing means are provided and said image storage means can be shared between said plurality of image processing means.

66. (Cancelled)

67. (Original) A computer-readable storage medium containing a program for implementing the method set forth in claim 11 by a computer.

68. (Original) A computer-readable storage medium containing a program for implementing the method set forth in claim 15 by a computer.

69. and 70. (Cancelled)

71. (Original) An image processing apparatus which constructs an image processing system together with an image selection apparatus connected via a network, for

selecting a desired material image from a plurality of material images, comprising hold means for holding the material images.

72. (Original) The image processing apparatus according to claim 71, wherein said image processing apparatus generates a mosaic image by combining the selected material image.

73.-76. (Cancelled)